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CINCPAC ALSO FOR FPA

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: MARR, PGOV, RP
SUBJECT: SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES RESOLUTION TO GIVE
NOTICE ON BASES

1. (U) THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON MAY 26 REPORTED OUT FAVORABLY SENATE RESOLUTION 126. SPONSORED BY MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER SENATOR ORLANDO MERCADO. THE RESOLUTION CALLS ON PRESIDENT AQUINO TO INFORM THE USG THAT THE GOP INTENDS TO TERMINATE THE MILITARY BASES AGREEMENT. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MERCADO SAID HIS RESOLUTION IS INTENDED TO "FORESTALL AN AUTOMATIC EXTENSION OF THE MBA." HE ADDED THAT IT LEAVES THE PRESIDENT FULL POWERS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO TERMINATE OR RENEGOTIATE THE AGREEMENT (I.E. IT LEAVES OPEN HER OPTIONS.) MERCADO ALSO SAID THE NOTICE OF TERMINATION SHOULD BE SENT ONE YEAR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 17, 1991 (SIC).

2. (U) COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON SENATOR LETICIA SHAHANI ALSO COMMENTED TO THE PRESS THAT THE RESOLUTION DOES NOT PREVENT THE GOVERNMENT FROM NEGOTIATING A NEW TREATY AND IS ONLY INTENDED TO AVOID AN EXTENSION OF THE MBA ON "A MERE TECHNICALITY."

3. (C) COMMENT: THE RESOLUTION IS EXPECTED TO PASS THE FULL SENATE READILY. IT APPEARS INTENDED AS A STATEMENT OF POLICY THAT IF THE BASES ARE TO CONTINUE THERE SHOULD BE A NEW AGREEMENT AFTER 1991. THE RESOLUTION ALSO APPEARS INTENDED AS AN ASSERTION THAT THE PHILIPPINE SENATE WILL INSIST ON BEING INVOLVED IN ANY RENEGOTIATION, AS WELL AS EXERCISE THE CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR SENATE RATIFICATION. THE SENATORS CLEARLY WANT TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE EFFORT BY THE EXECUTIVE TO ALLOW THE MBA TO CONTINUE BEYOND 1991 WITHOUT A RENEGOTIATION. IN THIS SENSE, IT DOES SEEK TO FORECLOSE ONE OF PRESIDENT AQUINO'S OPTIONS. PLATT
END OF MESSAGE

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